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EDITORIAL NOTES

The modern school programme is very much overcrowded. Some of the causes for this condition have been pointed out so often that they are fully recognized. We live in an age which can boast of more forms of knowledge than could any other age. Each new form of knowledge asks for admission to the course of study. In the second place, there is an increasing demand for activity outside of the school. Social life, the demands for training in music or art, or some other refinement are much more exacting than they were a generation ago. In the larger communities vacations tend to grow longer, the school day is condensed into a half-day session, and the hours of study are thus steadily contracted. In the third place, it is being urged on every hand in explicit terms and in a thousand silent acts that children qualify earlier for the productive occupations of life. Boys leave school to go to work. Parents are impatient of the slow progress of their children toward the goal of independence. For these and many other reasons our school programmes are crowded.

There is one type of recommendation which is coming to be heard more and more in these latter days. It is recommended that we return to the good old course of study. That was simple and economical and should be restored. Anyone who will examine that older course of study in detail will be convinced that it was not economical. It contained a great deal which was very trivial. There was much needless repetition and much padding in order to fill out the year. Thus the reading books were full of the most impossible stories, unjustified either by their appeal to children's interests or by their value for the training of the mind. The examples in arithmetic were piled mountain high in order to give enough work to fill out the long courses in

arithmetic. The advanced geographies were made larger chiefly by increasing the size of the maps and adding more names of localities. To return to these meager courses in the world of today would be like turning back from our trolleys and steam engines to horse cars and canal boats. The course of study must be enriched in order to comport with modern life.

If the new subjects have a right to recognition, the older subjects certainly have an equal right. To drop out or evade arithmetic for nature-study is just as irrational as to hold that there is no room for nature-study. The experiment of getting on without arithmetic and spelling and writing has been faithfully tried in many schools and it can safely be said that no school can dispense with these subjects. They are essential. The method of economizing by omitting them may have seemed simple and direct but it was not a true solution of the problem.

What we need is a reworking of each part of the course with reference to the whole, a series of detailed economies rather than some general adoption of either the new or the old. One of the greatest obstacles in the way of this reworking of the course is the fact that very few of our educators can take a broad view of the whole field. Our tendency is toward specialization, toward departmental teaching. The only expedient known to the specialist is to put out that which does not belong within his own subject. His own subject, on the other hand, he enthusiastically expands.

There is hope, however, in the fact that in all departments compound courses are being worked out. Thus the students of science are beginning to plan combination courses containing much that is essential and little that is trivial. The students of geography and industry are unifying their interests. The work of history and English is being combined. Thus through combination is economy being effected.

These combination courses realize in a new and most productive form what Herbart advocated in his doctrine of correlation. Many early interpreters of the doctrine looked for

external connections whereby one subject might be attached to another. This external linking did not work out the internal economy which was needed in order to renovate each subject. When, however, there is organized **Revive the Principle of Correlation** into a single compact course all the various materials which can be unified into a single type of study, then all of the contributing sciences and subjects are genuinely worked over and true economy is attained. Our elementary school needs more combination courses. Combination of arithmetic, geometry, and algebra should be worked out; combinations of physics, geography, and anthropology; combinations of all with English in its broadest sense. These combinations must be worked out in detail, not omitting the essential of any of the subjects nor destroying the opportunities for drill in each. Thus shall we bring about at once condensation and expansion, economy and enlargement of the school programme.

There will be a tendency on the part of all who are primarily interested in single subjects to object to this fusing of lines of thought which have been laboriously differentiated through the growth of science and modern scholarship. There is, however, full justification for this course in history, for in its early history the race learned to know the world in large, undifferentiated terms. So must the child. The specialist has undoubtedly mastered the world in greater detail than did his ancestors, but the breadth of his view is less.

For economy and breadth, for large preparation for future specialization, combination courses are the hope of our common schools.